

My name is Mike Dunbar. I've been a musician all my adult life. I currently record as a session musician in Nashville, Tn. Most of my recordings are for independent record labels.

I've also written hundreds of songs, several of which have been recorded on independent record labels. As an artist, I've recorded three albums of my own.

Several years ago in Chicago, I was able to convince our local radio station, WLS, to play songs from my first album. This helped my career immensely. Currently, the artists for whom I record find it impossible to get any of their music, on independent record labels, played locally with the occasional exception on college or public radio.

Given that radio is limited by broadcast frequency as to the number of stations available to any locality, market pressure will never encourage locally responsive programming. There is simply no room for sufficient competition among the stations while there is a great payoff for centralized programming.

"Local programming" should not mean the station chooses which New York or L.A. programs to offer. Locally produced programs should be mandated.

Also, if a station is primarily a "music" station, some of this local programming should be local music. Saying stations are responsive to the community because they broadcast the weather or the traffic while ignoring the local pool of artists is both disingenuous and ignorant of the importance of music in radio per se.

Community participation is laudable, but should not be given weight as local programming. It is easy for a radio station to sponsor a community activity, which more often than not provides as much of a p.r. benefit to the station as to the activity. Stations should sponsor local events, but not as a smokescreen behind which they ignore the local artist. This is reminiscent of the "men's clubs" who would buy a fire engine for the community with income from their gambling operations. What looks like a charitable act is really a "payoff."

I'm glad the FCC is addressing the issue of local programming in radio. The current atmosphere, if it existed in the sports world, would be as if every community had only one football stadium and the sports commission left its use up to the stadium owner. Would the stadium book the local high school or the NFL?

Thank you for your work and tell Mr. Powell that I don't believe Howard Stern.

All the Best,
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